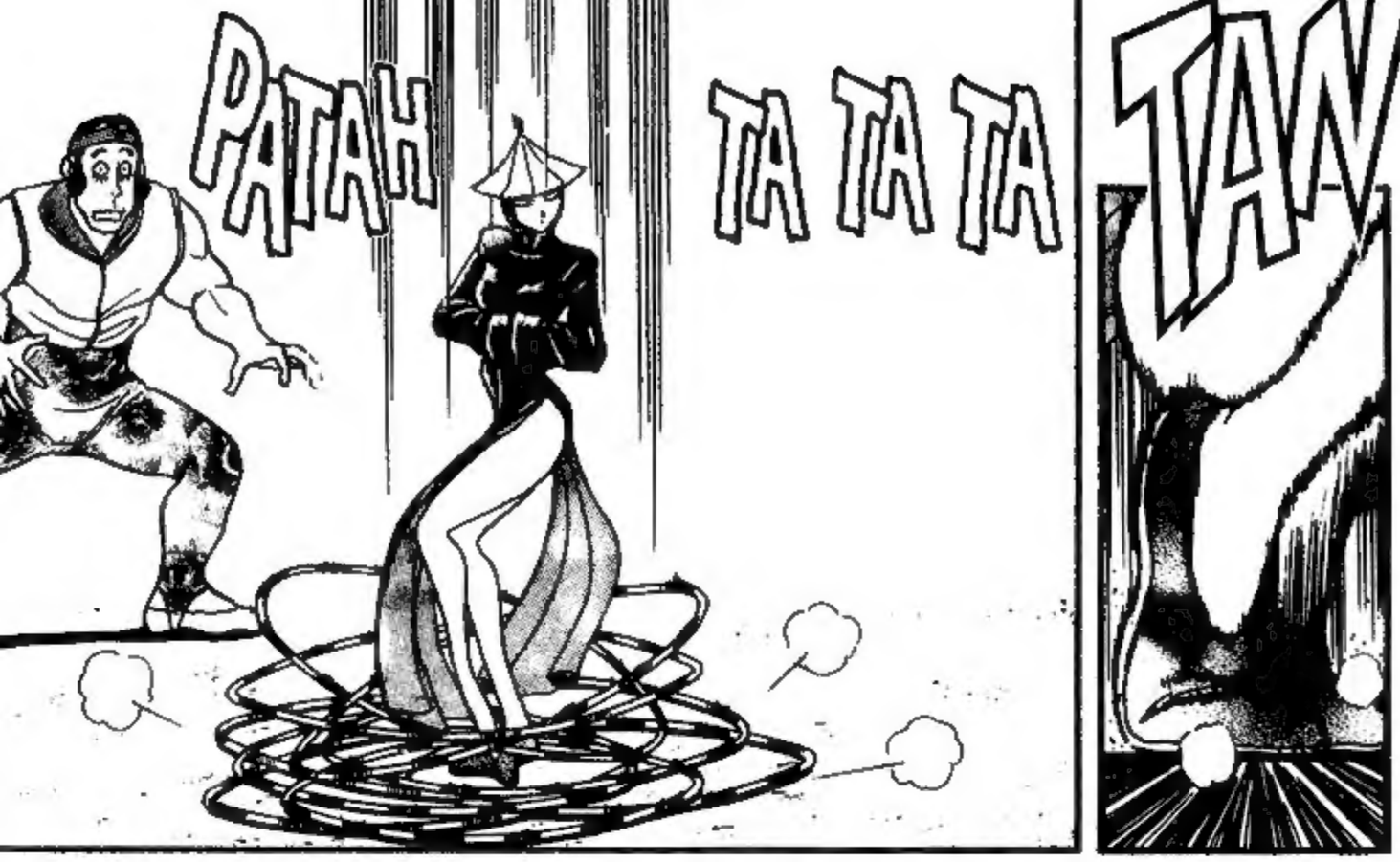
ACT V: CIRCUS * MASARU AT THE CIRCUS "PART THREE"

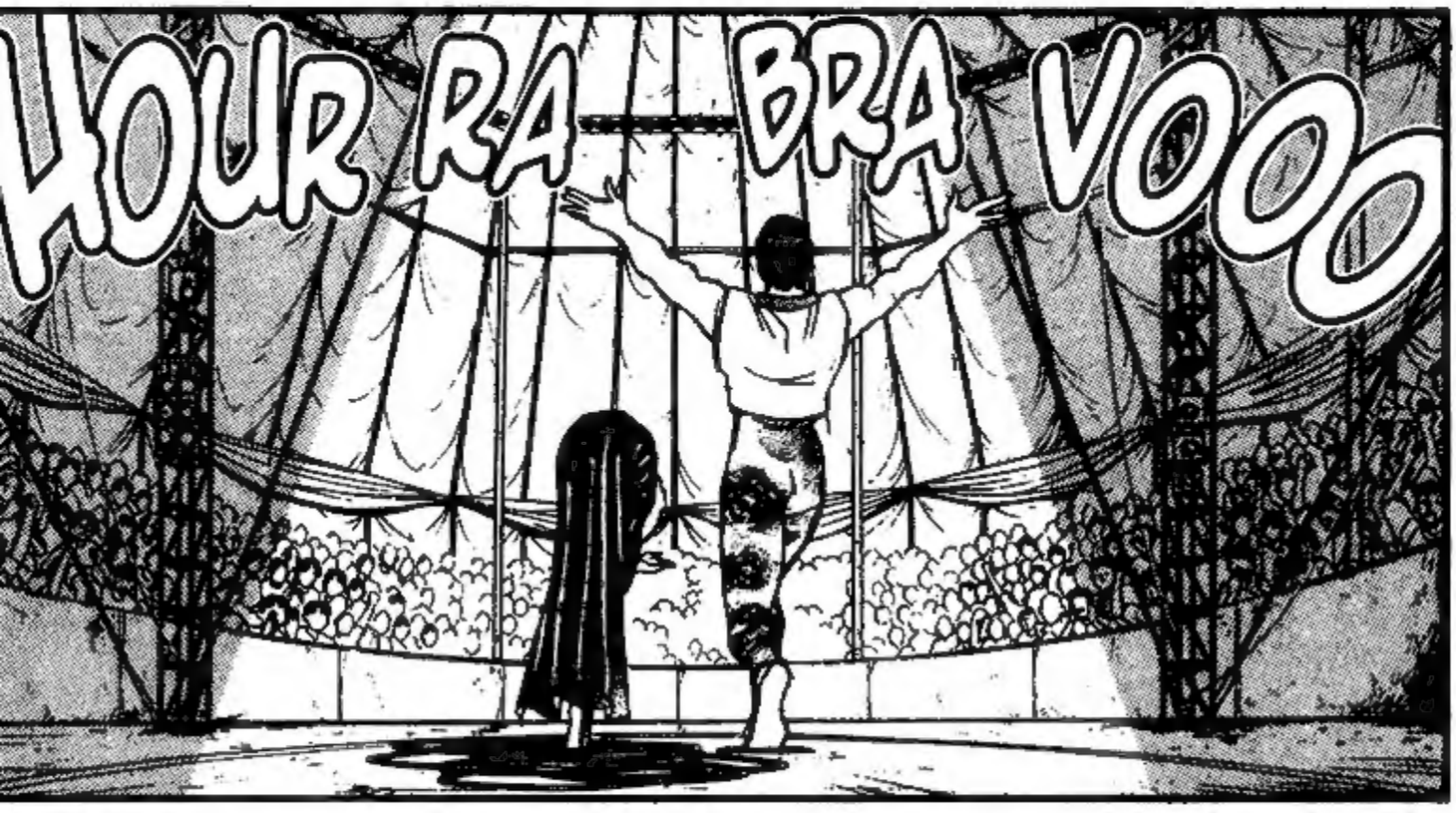
OUAIS
BRAVO
Straw Circus
WELCOME TO THE STRAW CIRCUS
CURRENTLY, I'M AT THE STRAW CIRCUS... SHIROGANE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ACT BECAUSE SEVERAL OF THE CIRCUS' ARTISTS SUDDENLY BECAME SICK.
IT'S MASARU AGAIN!
IT'S MY FIRST TIME SEEING SHIROGANE PERFORM ON A CIRCUS STAGE... AND SHE'S EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN USUAL!
OUAAHH

HER NUMBER IS ALMOST OVER...
I HAVE TO GET BACK TO IT, BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO MISS ANYTHING!
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HER DO THAT!
...I WONDER HOW SHE'LL FINISH HER NUMBER.
OUAAH!
SHE'S HANGING JUST BY HER ANKLES!
NO!
...SHE COULDN'T BE THINKING OF...
ZOING
SHE SWINGS!
WM WM

DAH

...SHE
JUMPED
!!!

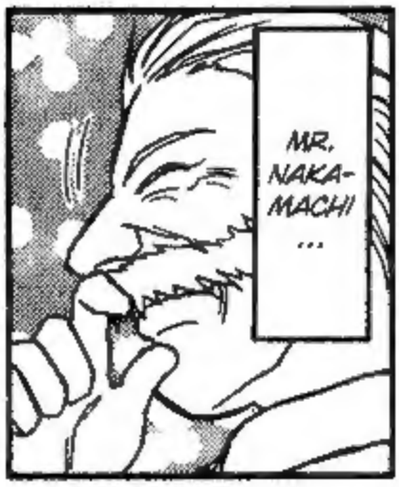

PATAH
TA TA TA
TAN


HOUR RA BRA VOOO

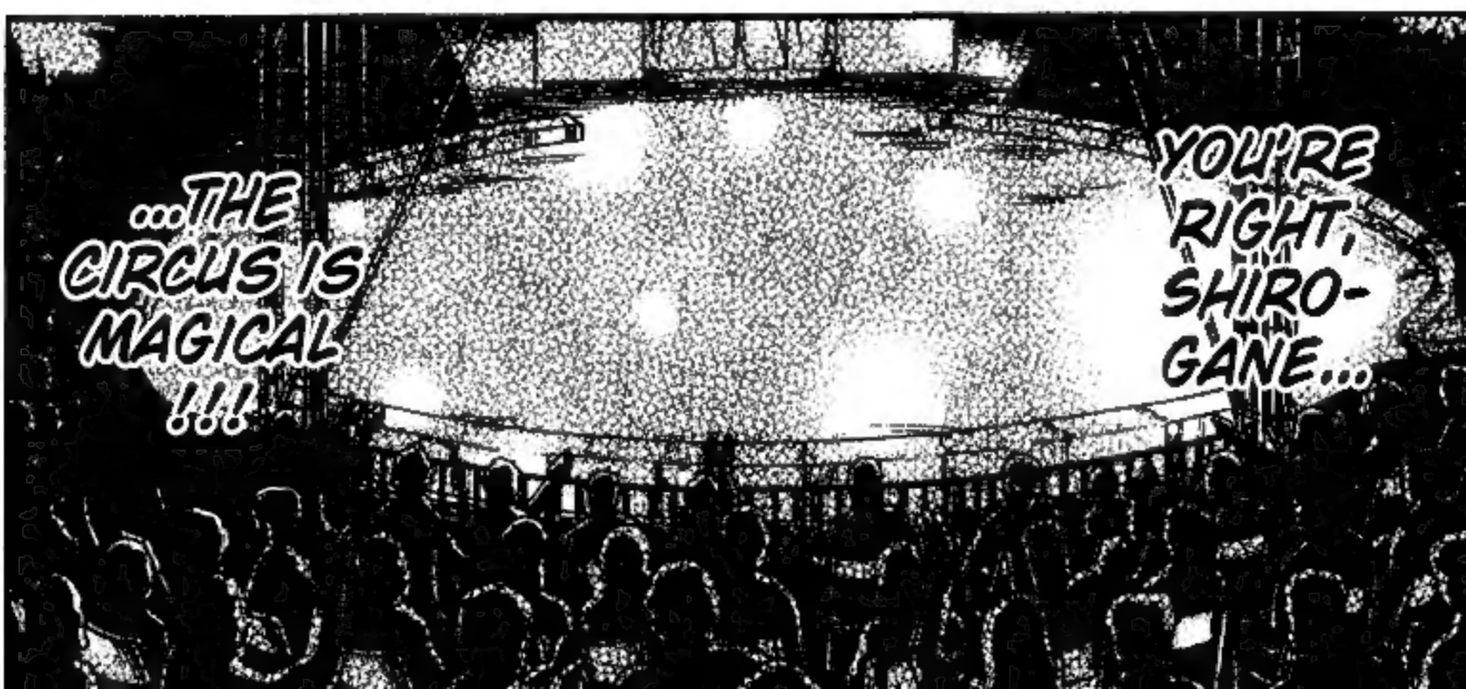
WHAT A SHOW!
NOW THAT SHE'S DONE, WE CAN ALL BREATHE EASIER!
EUAHHH
IT'S UNBE-LIEVABLE!
EVERYONE HELD THEIR BREATH...
DID YOU SEE THAT?!

EVERYONE IS LAUGHING WITH DELIGHT!

THE OTHERS TOO


MR. NAKA-MACHI ...

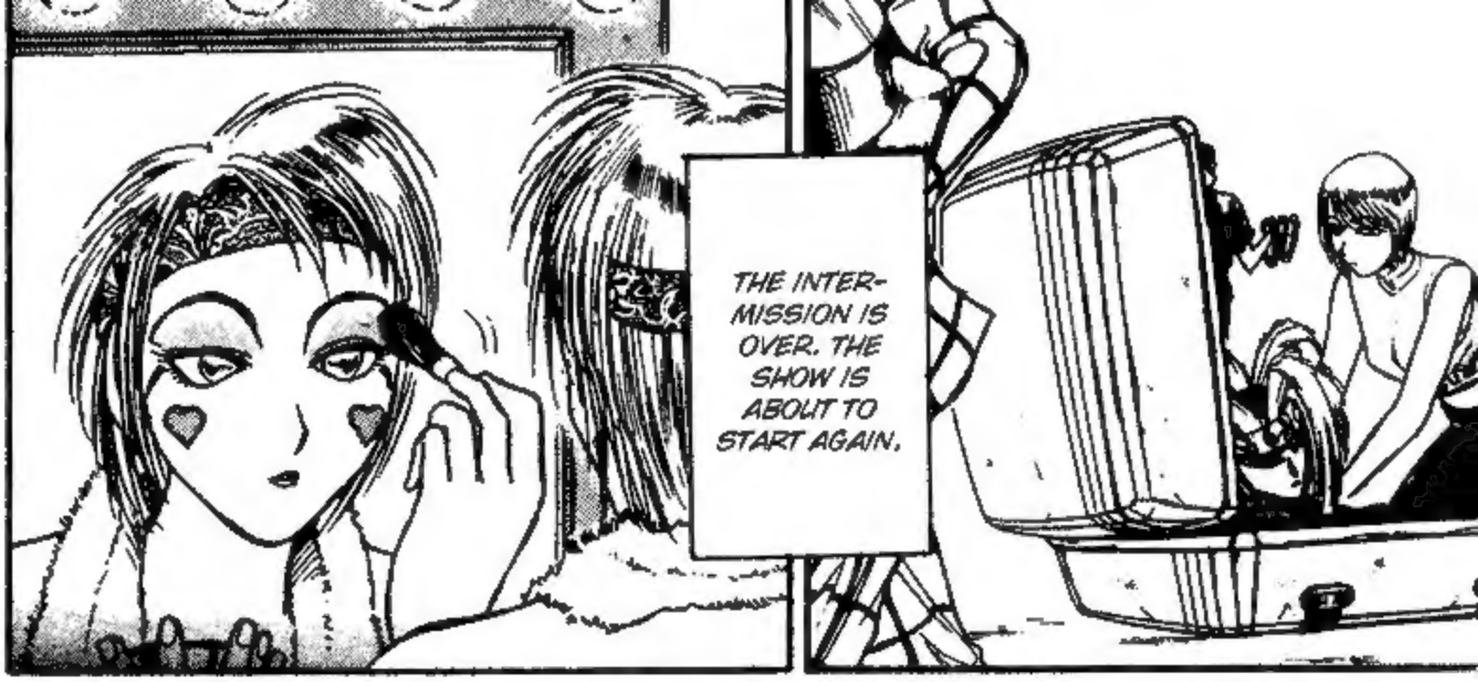
JUST BY WATCHING SHIRO-GANE'S ACT...
EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE FACED RECENT HARDSHIPS, THEY STARTED SMILING AGAIN...


...THE CIRCUS IS MAGICAL!!!
YOU'RE RIGHT, SHIRO-GANE...

HM...
KOJI AND YUMI'S SMILES!
BUT I'D STILL LIKE TO SEE...
YOU ARE CRUEL, SHIROGANE... YOU DIDN'T LET ME GET CLOSE EVEN ONCE!
THANK YOU...
BRAVO, SHIROGANE! IT WAS MAGNIFI-CENT!
YES... SORRY...
THAT LAST JUMP WAS SO PERFECT! YOU HAD THE AUDIENCE ENTHRALLED!
GOODBYE ...
TAN
TAN
TAN
UNFORTU-NATELY, I COULDN'T FIND THE RIGHT MOMENT... OH WELL, THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT TIME.
I'M STILL WONDERING IF YOU WEREN'T JUST WAITING FOR ME TO HUG YOU BY SURPRISE...

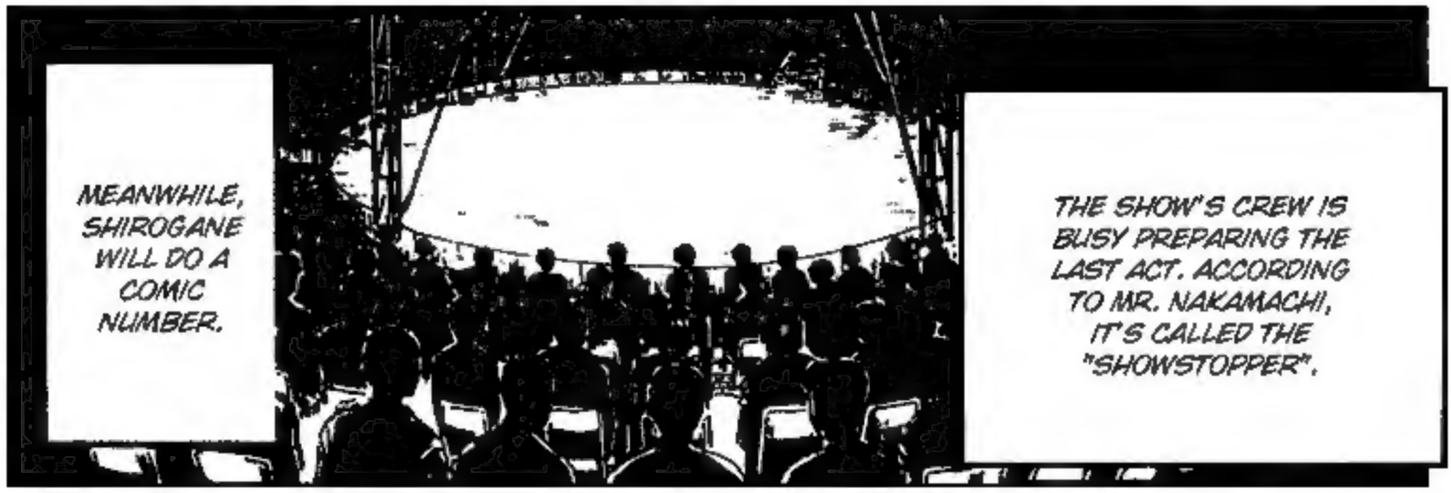
!
TON
BY THE WAY, YOU'RE MISSING CLOWNS, TOO...
GOOD-BYE.
I AGREED TO DO THIS TODAY ONLY BECAUSE LAST TIME, I LEFT WITHOUT WARNING...
STAY WITH US, SHIROGANE! YOU'LL BE PAID VERY WELL!
THE EASIEST WOULD BE TO PLAY SOME MUSIC WHILE WE READY THE TRAPEZES...
WE CAN FIND ANOTHER WAY!
DON'T WORRY, DAD.
...I SEE...
WELL... UH... YES, THEY ALL HAVE STOMACH-ACHES...
THERE'S ALSO ANOTHER PERSON WHO IS SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE.
ME!
OF YOUR CLOWN ACT, TOO...
DON'T, I'LL TAKE CARE
HUH? BUT WHO WILL BE THE CLOWN?

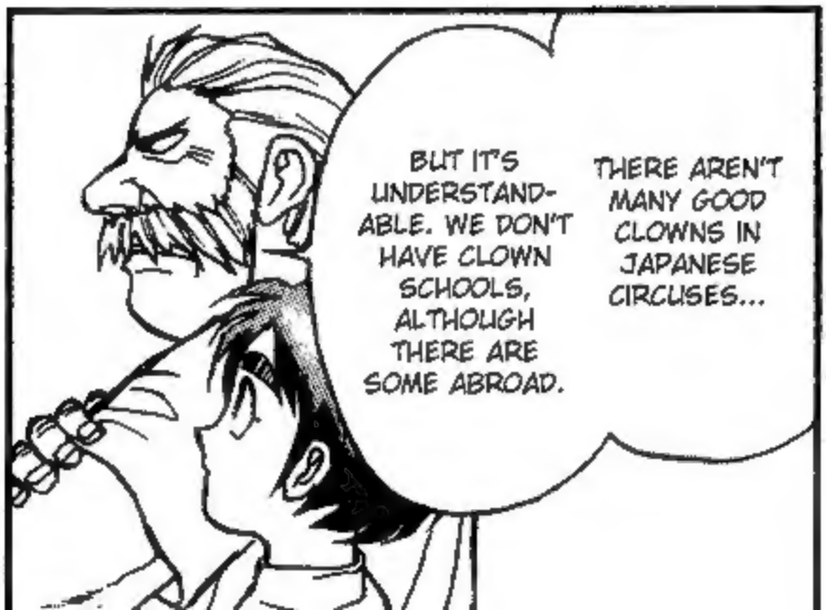
HIRO, WHERE WERE YOU?
HEHE! IT WAS AWESOME !!!
SHOOT! I COULDN'T SEE SHIRO-GANE!
THE SECOND PART OF OUR SHOW WILL START AFTER A 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION!
SHIROGANE HAD ASKED ME
TO GO FETCH ARLEQUIN...
TARANDA... YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN ASK THIS OF...
HUH?! ME?
I COULDN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN...
BUT... SHIROGANE'S NUMBER IS ALREADY OVER!
PSS ooo
PSS ...
FSHHH
THANK YOU!
UNDER-STOOD... I'LL DO IT!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
DND
TON


THE INTER-MISSION IS OVER. THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START AGAIN.

YES, I'LL KEEP THEM ONLY FOR A FEW MINUTES ...
WHAT?! YOU WERE A TAMER AT THE GREAT LONG CIRCUS?!

ANYWAY, THEY ONLY OBEY ME!
WHY D'YOU WANNA BORROW MY DOGS?!

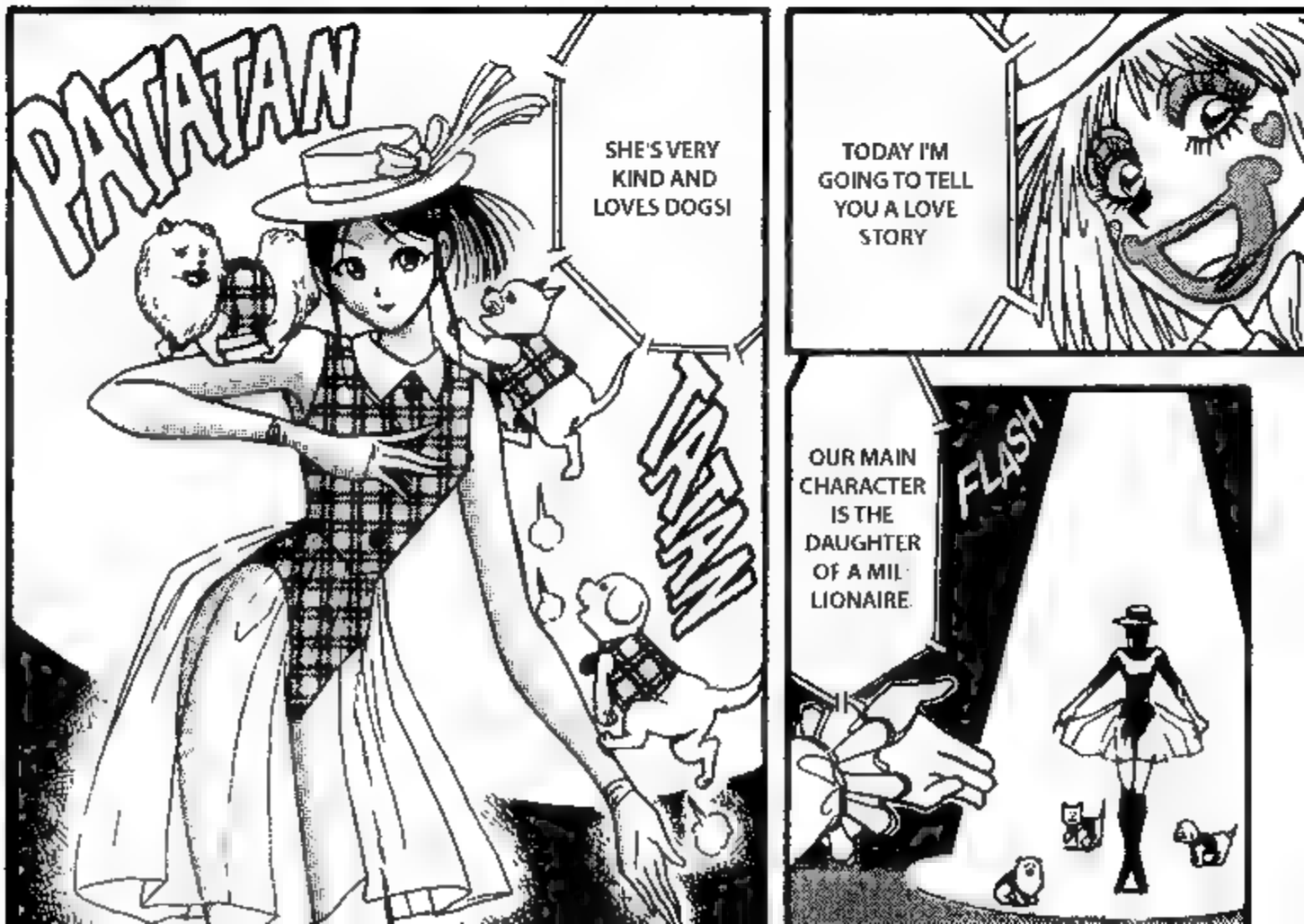

MEANWHILE, SHIROGANE WILL DO A COMIC NUMBER.
THE SHOW'S CREW IS BUSY PREPARING THE LAST ACT. ACCORDING TO MR. NAKAMACHI, IT'S CALLED THE "SHOWSTOPPER".


BUT IT'S UNDERSTAND-ABLE. WE DON'T HAVE CLOWN SCHOOLS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME ABROAD.
THERE AREN'T MANY GOOD CLOWNS IN JAPANESE CIRCUSES...

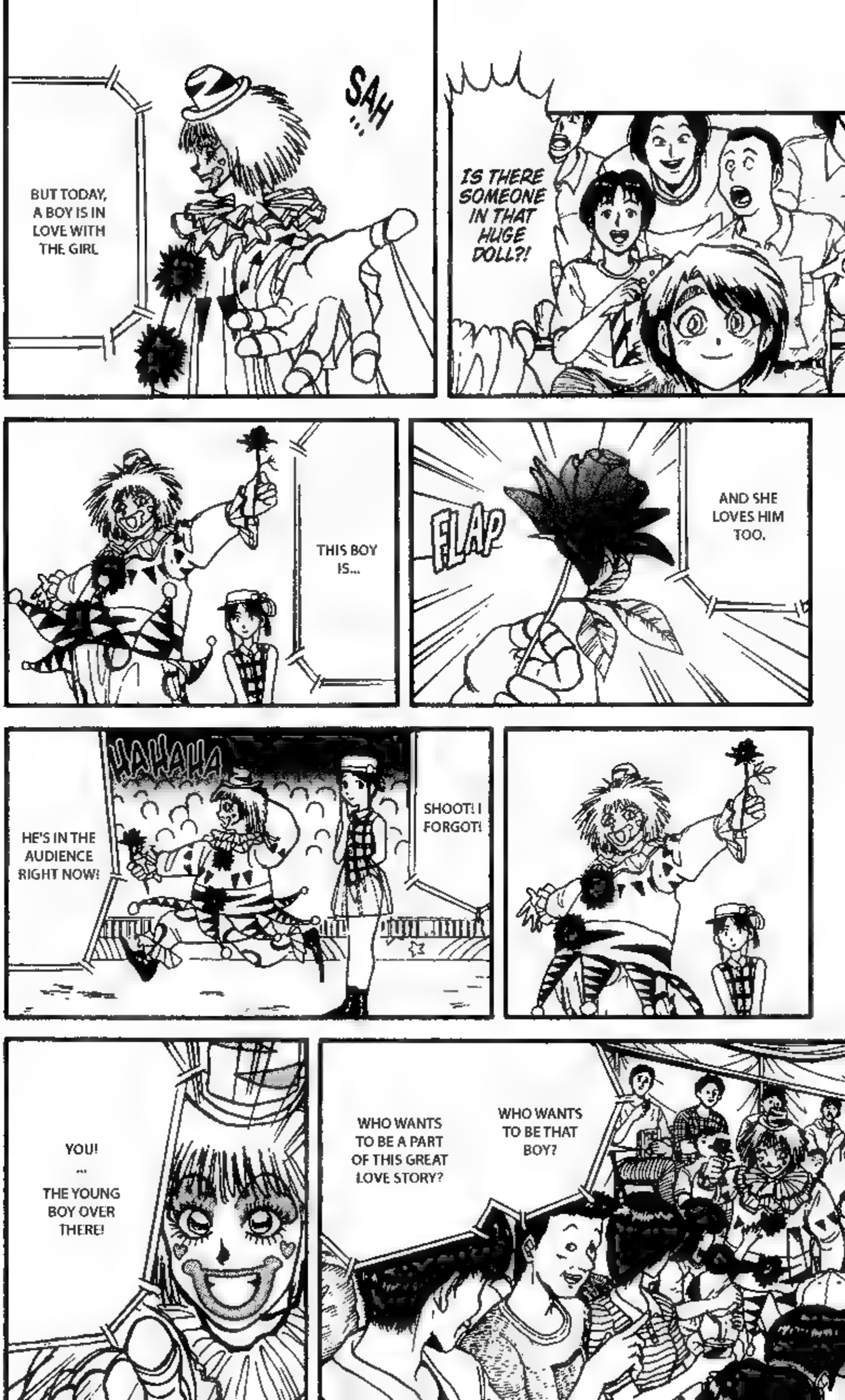
...

IN JAPAN, IT'S THE OPPOSITE!
IN JAPAN, CLOWNS ARE CALLED "PIERROTS." I FIND IT A LITTLE DEMEANING... IN THE WEST, CLOWNS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SHOW. THEIR ART IS WELL RESPECTED.
UNFORTUNATELY, CLOWNS ARE SOMEWHAT DESPISED. PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY, "IF AN ACT GOES WRONG, SEND IN THE CLOWNS!"
THEY LEARN BY THEMSELVES, BY WATCHING THEIR ELDERS...
THEN WHAT DO THOSE WHO WANT TO BECOME CLOWNS DO?
"MY GRANDFATHER...
...WAS A CLOWN!"
HM... IS THAT SO...
HERE I AM! I'M SHIROGANE THE CLOWN!
HELLO, FRIENDS!!!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
FLASH

YAHOO!
SHUT UP, YOU IDIOTS!
GO, SHIROGANE! YOU'RE THE BEST!!! YIPPEE!!!
YAHOO!
...I'M A CHATTER-BOX.
CLOWNS LIKE TO MIME! BUT ME...
LISTEN TO THE STORY I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU!
BEATS ME..
UH, DAD... WHAT IS SHE DOING?


PATATAN
SHE'S VERY KIND AND LOVES DOGS!
PATATAN
TODAY I'M GOING TO TELL YOU A LOVE STORY
FLASH
OUR MAIN CHARACTER IS THE DAUGHTER OF A MIL LIONAIRE.

OUAH!!
YEAH, TARANDA !!!
HOP HOP HOP!
ZAZAANG
THIS GIRL HAS A BODYGUARD...
..WHO'S A SCARY TEN-FOOT-HIGH GIANT!


BUT TODAY, A BOY IS IN LOVE WITH THE GIRL
SAH
IS THERE SOMEONE IN THAT HUGE DOLL?!
THIS BOY IS...
FLAP
AND SHE LOVES HIM TOO.
HE'S IN THE AUDIENCE RIGHT NOW!
HAHAHA
SHOOT! I FORGOT!
YOU! ... THE YOUNG BOY OVER THERE!
WHO WANTS TO BE A PART OF THIS GREAT LOVE STORY?
WHO WANTS TO BE THAT BOY?

DOOHH
I CAN SEE THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO BE IN OUR PLAY!!!

AH

...
SHIROGANE!!! YOU AREN'T SERIOUS, ARE YOU?!
WHAT?! BUT!

FINE! OKAY!

"IF I HAD BEEN A CLOWN...
...I DEFINITELY WOULD HAVE MADE PEOPLE LAUGH OUT LOUD..."

KOJI AND YUMI... THEY'RE LOOKING AT ME...

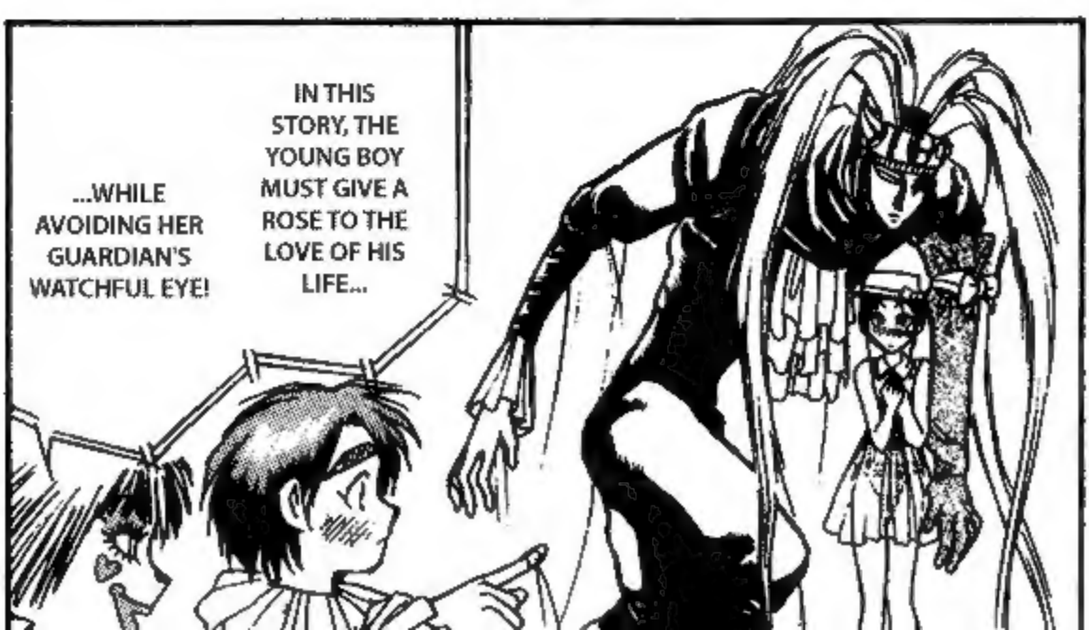
...SORRY, YOUNG MASTER...
DON'T WORRY ...
I'LL DO MY BEST ...

OUAH
OOH
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!!! A CHEER FOR OUR LITTLE PRINCE!!!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

YEAH ...
MASARU DOESN'T LOOK VERY AT EASE...

HA HA
OOPS! I PUT A LITTLE TOO MUCH ON!

VLOF
THIS BOY IS A CHIMNEY SWEEPER!
SO WE'LL DIRTY HIM UP A BIT!


...WHILE AVOIDING HER GUARDIAN'S WATCHFUL EYE!
IN THIS STORY, THE YOUNG BOY MUST GIVE A ROSE TO THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE...

LET'S START OUR STORY. FIRST, TAKE THIS ROSE!

NO, NO, NO! IF YOU ARE THAT SHY...
...SHE'LL NEVER KNOW YOUR FEELINGS!
UH ...
AH?
IT'S YOUR TURN!
ZO-ING
...THIS!
AT LEAST TRY TO DO...
HA HA HA
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE
...AH!!!
EVEN THOUGH I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CIRCUSES OR BEING A CLOWN, SHE MANAGED TO MAKE ME A COMIC RELIEF...
SHE HAS SUCH GREAT SHOWMANSHIP THAT SHE INSTINCTIVELY KNOWS HOW TO CATCH PEOPLE'S ATTENTION.
COME ON! PULL THAT LEG HIGHER!
SHIROGANE IS VERY TALENTED!
HA HA HA HA

KARAKURI CIRCUS / END OF VOLUME 6

BLACKOUT